

About Me

Hi, I'm Ellie, I love dogs and I love learning. I try new things, and accomplish goals I make. I have a dog Named turkey and he is super cute and makes my world. I am a gymnast, friend, team member, leader, and more. My questions for science are based on things that happen to me but in a different way. I have great ideas and would love to share them. I love helping people out and I have always wanted to make a difference in my own way and maybe if that meant my hard work helped someone figure out a solution to a situation

The Project

The project takes place over 7 days and with 7 participants. Each participant has been given a sheet with questions, emoji charts, and a vent area, as well as a get to know me sheet. And they have to hang out with their dog for 10 minutes a day for 7 days. There is also an activity to do with it and that is walk your dog or play with your dog. You get to pick which one. It was recommended you do alternating but ya. And this was documented when they were feeling upset or down.

Project Purpose

The purpose of this project is to answer my question. Most literally I wonder this all the time in the car on my way to the gym. The purpose of this is to find out if dogs can affect your mood on the scale I have created.

This can also be such a good tool for me and this can be shared throughout the country and it can help so many people handle and control their emotions so much better, that's my dream.

Potential Impact on Humanity

This could be such a good tool and if this got big enough to go world wide dogs would get brought into therapy sessions and used as a strategy to manage stress, anxiety, an issue that is causing you to feel heartbroken.

This might also be good for being at home and needing some relief. It could be spread world wide and help hundreds of people.

Research Question

Can dogs improve a person's mood from very sad to very happy? If yes/no, why can/can it improve a person's mood?

Hypothesis

I believe that Dogs can affect a person's mood and will increase to be more happy than sad because they are starting from somewhat sad and if they are doing the activity provided then they will be distracted by their dog. Also most dogs have a positive effect on humans as humans feed off of each other's energy and dogs have lots of energy. Do humans like to match that energy to play with them therefore distracting them from what was bringing them to feeling upset.

Process of design

The thought of this science project was always going to involve a visual representation of what I'm asking the participant to rate on a scale of emojis. I also decided to add a vent area just to feel their feelings or to tell me something you would like to share. I added a get to know you sheet for some friendly questions and some mandatory because I didn't want to be scary or demanding to a person. And I also felt that sharing about myself might open up the book here and build trust with the person.

Now I get to know you

Please answer all questions below.

(MANDATORY)

Name: _____

Birthday: MM/DD/YY

Age: ____

Sex: MALE FEMALE

Hobbies:

Favorite food/dessert:

Unique things about you

Anything I should know about

Anything you want me to know about you

I agree to participate in this science fair study and have my data used for science

A YES

B NO

INSTRUCTIONS

****BEFORE****

1. ****Identify Your Current Emotional State:****

- Look at the scale provided (1 to 6) and select the emoji that best represents your current emotional state.
- For example, if you feel very sad, choose emoji 😞; if you feel overjoyed, choose emoji 😄.

2. ****Select an Activity:****

- Choose between the two activities listed: "Walk your dog" or "Cuddle your dog."
- Highlight the activity you'd like to do today.

3. ****Describe Your Emotional State:****

- Indicate the chosen emotion on the scale
- Describe why you feel this way. .

4. ****Additional Information:****

- Share any relevant information about yourself or your day.

****AFTER****

5. ****Duration of Activity:****

- Record the amount of time you spent on the chosen activity.

6. ****Reassess Your Emotional State:****

- Reevaluate your emotional state using the scale (1 to 6) after completing the activity.

7. ****Describe Post-Activity Emotions:****

- Explain how you feel after engaging in the selected activity. 18. ****Comparison and Explanation:****

- Reflect on whether you feel better or worse than before the activity. Provide a brief explanation.

9. ****Additional Thoughts:****

- If there's anything else you want to share or express, use this section.

Example

1	2	3	4	5	6
					

Date: December, 21, 2023 Name: Elliette lowe

The scale is classifying what each option represents, 1 Very Sad 2 Upset 3 Neutral 4 Happy 5 Very Happy 6 Overjoyed.

Which activity out of the 2 would you like to do today (highlight it)

- A. Walk your dog
- B. Cuddle your dog

Which of these 6 emotions best describe your emotional state currently? 2 1/2

Describe how you are feeling using the option of emotion you picked

I am feeling like a 2 1/2 because a girl at school was telling me how big my nose was and that made me sad, and insecure. The emotion I'm describing is upsetting.

Is there anything you want me to know or would like to put down?

I have dyslexia. I am embarrassed to show my face at school

AFTER

What was the amount of time you did the activity for? 12 minutes

1 being very sad 2 being upset 3 being neutral 4 being happy 5 being very happy 6 being overjoyed

Which of these 6 emotions best describe your emotional state currently? 3 3/4
(after doing one of the activities listed above)





Describe how you are feeling using the option of emotion you picked

I feel better and more like a numb feeling were im not happy but not upset
Do you feel any bit better/worse than before the activity if so why?

I feel a little bit better and i think its cuz my dog distracted me

Is there anything you want me to know or would like to put down?
nope

Example

1	2	3	4	5	6
					

Date: Name:

The scale is classifying what each option represents, 1 Very Sad 2 Upset 3 Neutral 4 Happy 5 Very Happy 6 Overjoyed.

Which activity out of the 2 would you like to do today (highlight it)

- C. Walk your dog
- D. Cuddle your dog

Which of these 6 emotions best describe your emotional state currently?

Describe how you are feeling using the option of emotion you picked

Is there anything you want me to know or would like to put down?

AFTER

What was the amount of time you did the activity for?

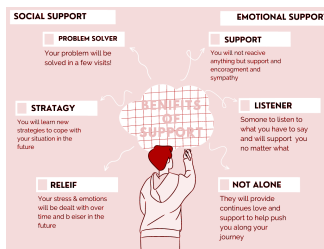
1 being very sad 2 being upset 3 being neutral 4 being happy 5 being very happy 6 being overjoyed

Which of these 6 emotions best describe your emotional state currently?
(after doing one of the activities listed above)

Describe how you are feeling using the option of emotion you picked

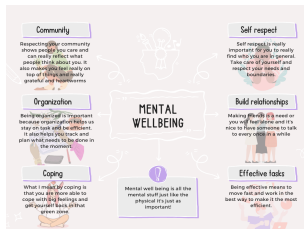
Do you feel any bit better/worse than before the activity if so why?

Is there anything you want me to know or would like to put down?



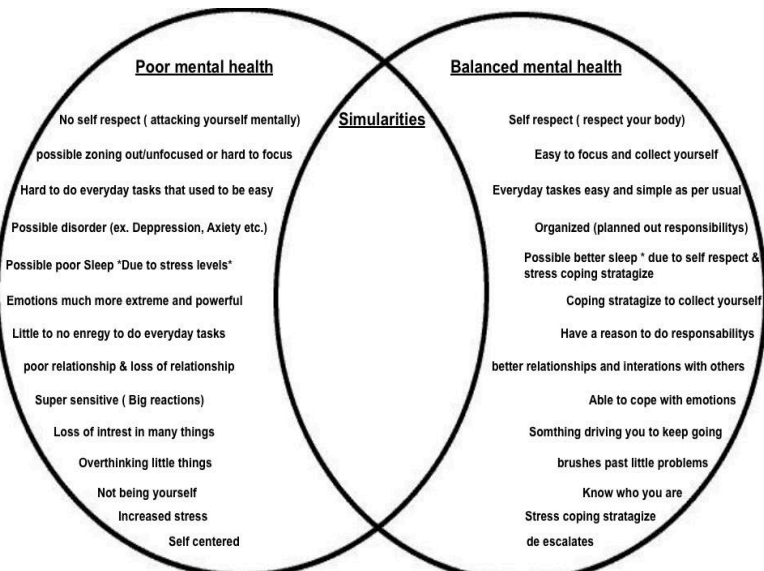
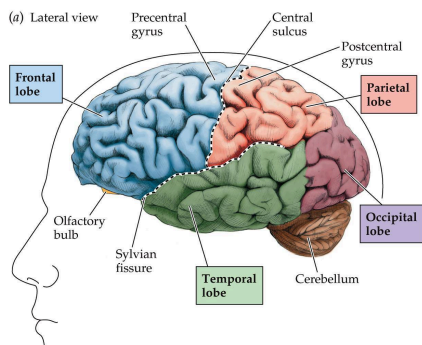
What is mental health

Mental health is the emotional state of a person and your well being. It affects how we feel, interact, and act towards others. Mental health helps us be social with others, helps us do everyday things, and focus much better. Mental health is responsible for helping us make friends, be connected with our community, learn how to respect and love ourselves, plan and organize our everyday tasks to be easier.



The Frontal Lobes

The frontal lobes are considered to be the center of emotions, This means that the Frontal lobes take part in how you react to situations and the way you feel. The frontal lobes are located at the front of the brain behind your forehead. The Frontal lobes are responsible for many functions, These functions include, Organization, Planning skills, Self control, Social interactions, Empathy, Personality, Emotions, And motor functions. The frontal lobe is also responsible for important physiological skills such as judgment, Problem solving, memory, language, responsible decisions , and coping with emotions.



Poor mental health VS balanced mental health

- **Poor mental health** is unhealthy, or unbalanced mental well being. Poor mental health has many effects on your daily life. The diagram is showcasing multiple cons to having poor mental health. Having poor mental health is truly unhealthy for you mentally because you are not in the right headspace to work efficiently or to make responsible decisions.

- **Balanced mental health** is the opposite of poor mental health. Most people thrive for balanced mental health because it is really important to be balanced with mental health, Meaning that all of the benefits listed for

- balanced mental health they won't always be the case. That is for good reason though, because if you're always all of these things listed then you're not

- being true to yourself, Meaning maybe you're in denial and trying to push every emotion you have down. But that emotion will still be there. But feeling your feelings does not mean you have poor mental health, it's actually really normal.
- **This diagram** is compared in a way of opposites to represent how similar two different types of mental health is but at the same time how different they are, so the way it was compared is if there different, there different, meaning not breaking down the word yes both are have something listed about focusing but its not the same way of focus, therefore it is different.

Why mental health and well-being is important

Mental health has a huge effect on everyday life and it determines how we interact with the environment, people, and animals. It also can come down to if you get a job, If someone sees that you really are not good at handling stress and high demand, they can say no to you making it hard to find a job. Having self love and respect is also really important so if that wasn't there then you would hurt your own feelings and constantly feel really intense emotions. It makes it easier to cope with situations and easier to control emotions if mental health is prioritized.

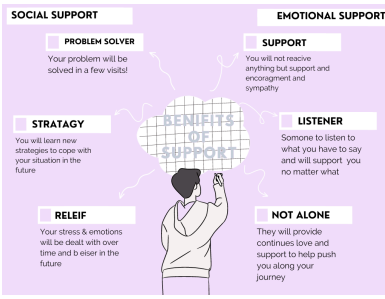
Hypothesis

I believe that Dogs can take away some of that hurt by distracting that person away from that emotional pain they are experiencing. Pain is worse when all you're thinking about is how much it hurts so I believe if the mind went off that track of how much that hurt their feelings and just did something with a dog it won't fix it but it might take some of that pain away from that person. And I feel the personality trait of some people that try to match the energy of the people around them, well dogs have a lot of energy and when you try to match that energy it might take that away as you're now playing with them.

Healthy Habit

Good mental health and wellbeing habits & social support & emotional support benefits

Mental health is very important. This means you should take care of it and care about it as much as you care about any other part of your body! These are some mental health habits that are pretty basic and easy to get into the habit of doing. There is also another visual poster I have listed! It is about social support and emotional support and what each support system provides. All that is listed isn't all of the benefits, just basic benefits provided that are big key points. To conclude both emotional, social support, They are both very valuable and important tools to use. Both support systems provide support and companionship. As they both are very different in their own ways they are very similar at the same time as they both are designed to provide mental support in multiple different ways.



What happens if mental health is not prioritized/taken care of.

If mental health is not prioritized you will go from balanced to poor mental health. But there are multiple ways to climb back up that mountain to get back to balanced or even just “good enough”, every step of the way is a celebration! It's like another mountain you just climbed, So celebrate it! Be proud of yourself

“Balanced mental health”

I say balanced mental health because there is no such thing as perfect mental health. And people may take the word “Good” as your never any other emotion than happy, and that's not normal. It's super normal to feel sad,angry, or scared without being in poor mental health. So it's always good to feel your emotions so let your emotions be emotions,with that being said. You can feel your emotions, but keep in mind that you also need to control your emotions in a way of appropriateness.

What is Social support?

Social support is assistance from a person. Social support is a type of phycological support that will help you find resources to cope with issues you are having they will give you feedback and some solutions to your issue

Why is social support important?

Social support is important because it helps us understand emotions, and cope with them. It can relieve stress by using a given strategy to cope with it.



It really benefits mental health and well being because it's a tool a lot of people use to cope with emotions, and stress.

Possible outcomes if social support did not exist

If social support did not exist humanity would be tremendously affected because every person needs social support in a different way to support their needs, and if social support did not exist nobody would get that support needed which meant that social interactions would most likely go down because of the way that society is built technology is becoming big meaning there is less and less social interactions so people might lose that skill.

What is emotional support?

Emotional support is a person who is going to listen to you and give you sympathy and show you they are listening, they will not give any feedback they are just giving you support and showing you that you can trust them, they are there for you for when you crash and there ready to hold you and let you cry on there shoulder.



Emotional support VS Social support

Emotional support- Emotional support you are not there to fix an issue, you're there to talk to someone and not feel alone. It's nice to let it out and talk to someone. Anyone can give emotional support to you which is nice so you don't have to pay for sessions or have someone you may not trust as much as your best friend or family member **etc.**

Social support- Social support is where you go to fix a problem you're having. You will get feedback on how you should act

towards a person and they are going to try to make this ongoing problem stop happening. It's not a place to just talk and have someone listen to you, it's where they want your problem solved. These two very different ways of support share many benefits! Both of these are really awesome and helpful.

Why is Emotional support so important?

Emotional support is so important because sometimes you really don't need a solution, you just need to talk about it to someone and feel that they support you. Emotional support is so useful

in situations in the moment when you just need to cry and hug someone. Social support is great but not in the moment for most people.

Common strategize

Common strategies mean that a lot of people use them more than other strategies. I'm going to share the most common ones and why they are so common!

Breathing- There are a lot of breathing exercises and it's so simple and you don't need any items to do it.

Music - Listening to music gets your mind off of what's happening and the music might relax you. People really like music so that adds to it!

Distraction- Distraction is one of my favorite ones because it works really well because when you're just doom spiraling about it it makes it a lot worse. And it's easy on the go because you again don't need anything to do this coping strategy

Eat food- When you're hungry everything escalates in your head. Most people feel way better after eating!

Drink water- This is one of the most common ones to me because I think it's just something else to focus on and is refreshing, making you feel refreshed, It also re-hydrates you if you are upset.

Benefits of dogs being in therapy

Social interactions - in therapy **sessions** you are interacting with people as you are talking with them about whatever needs to be talked about but even if you're not talking you're still socially interacting just with a dog!

Stress reduction - sometimes going to a therapy session can be a little bit stressful and scary. It really depends on the person and the situation but dogs have some type of spark and can really relax some people at certain times.

Comfort and support- Dogs can be comforting and loving showing support and can make you feel more relaxed, safe, and comfortable to express yourself better!

Enjoyment - Some people really like dogs and enjoy being around them and interacting with them.

Non verbal communication - Dogs have a simple understanding of body language and that being said they can provide support and comfort during times that they can tell you are struggling.

Emotional support - Dogs are great at providing emotional support and solidarity, they are perfect for that and can help you regulate your emotions better and back to an appropriate level.

Cons of dogs being in therapy

Allergies- allergies being so common have eliminated dogs from being a part of most therapy sessions. Allergies are important and therapy is meant to be a safe place and someone may not feel as safe as they should if they know there are dogs and that they are allergic to them.

Rules- Rules are rules and needed to be followed to keep everyone safe so perceptions are amust and sometimes it's just not worth taking the risk

Unpredictable behaviors- Dogs can be very unpredictable because they are like any other animal and they need to be treated and dealt with precautions.



Overwhelmed dogs- Dogs can get overwhelmed sometimes cursing them to possibly be unpredictable and hurt someone

Distracting- Dogs can take away from the lesson, or conversation going on making it hard to concentrate and maintain a growth mindset for the person who is trying to work with them/ help them

Discomfort- some people are scared of dogs or they may feel a little intimidated by the dog and therapy is like a consensus meaning everyone has to agree.

Dogs in therapy

Dogs are in therapy across Alberta just not too often, certainly not often enough= and that is because there is not enough research behind it to support many service animals and emotional support animals being brought into sessions.

Why should dogs be brought into therapy sessions more often?

Dogs have an impact on humans in multiple ways but they can have a negative and positive effect if they are not used as a proper resource. If people are given the option as they should than they will be mostly [positive with risks but the people who decided to do it are now doing it at there own risk

Dogs in social and emotional support

Emotional support dogs; provide comfort and companionship to the dog owner, but are not trained to do specific tasks that assist a disability

Emotional support dogs are meant To provide comfort and support during any time needed. They are not trained to do specific dogs like a therapy dog for special needs. Emotional support animals don't get any Treatment to be allowed in to other places because some places may think that's your pet

Social support dogs are there to help the public . If you go to the airport you might see a dog that has a vest saying "pet me" this means that it is a dog meant for people who are scared to fly. Dogs in social support are not seen often and could definitely be brought into this matter. Why more!

This projects impact on humanity

This project has an effect on humanity to open up the door for dogs and as another resource for humans to acknowledge and use! This could benefit a lot. If someone found this experiment and thought it was really cool they might tell someone and then people keep telling people and people start even interacting with dogs a little bit more. A small act makes a big difference! People might start having improved moods meaning a little bit less people might fight with each other. It wouldn't make a big difference, maybe not even noticeable to the average person but if

people started using knowledge and sharing it, it might spread. I think of it like a rumor in a school!

Community interaction & connection

I connected with some psychologists that work with children! I also have some University students working on the PHD or Masters degree in psychology. They participated in my project and I'm very excited about it! I had reached out to the program called B.A.R.K. and asked them and Dr. Bennett if there was anything I should research specifically about dogs to support my project. They responded and gave me some articles and a lovely response.

B.A.R.K

B.A.R.K. - B.A.R.K. is a therapy session program that is designed to reduce stress, anxiety, and to improve your overall well being. This was done by having a session with a dog and you get to hangout with a dog and a handler for however long you needed. The dogs are trained and have handlers to help the dogs out when needed. There are currently 60 therapy dogs that are volunteering right now and multiple alumni dogs! B.A.R.K. do walk-in sessions designed for students to just drop in and hangout with the dogs for as long as they needed! **B.A.R.K.** is located at the

The Pilot Program

The pilot program was an online program designed to provide emotional support and companionship over a video that was filmed then put online. It was created in 2020 to support people during covid 19 as that can be very stressful too! There were thirteen handlers and their therapy dogs who filmed videos! These videos were 5 minutes long and reduced anxiety, stress, and loneliness

Research & impact on university students

The bark team did some studying and this was performed over the course of three semesters in 2013 to 2014. How it worked was students would tell the bark team how they were feeling stressed wise and stress levels were fairly high having exams coming up. There was a huge impact overall coming from a rating scale from 1-5 1 being totally not stressed 5 being incredibly stressed the average before was 4.47 later being reduced to the average of 2.73 using the same type of scale to assess their feelings. These sessions do not have a limit, University students are able to stay as long as they want until they feel less stressed. The average amount of time was 35 minutes with the dogs!

Citations

Emotional support

Possible outcomes if emotional support didn't exist

Emotional support is really important because it gives you support when you need it. It can also help you when you're feeling upset. Emotional support helps people overcome challenges. If this didn't exist it would be very challenging to keep relationships with people. Why would it be well because that some people can not have the weight of someone's emotions on them so they don't want to be in a relationship with them. With less emotional support meaning less relationships turning into h

Emotional support is really beneficial, Emotional support provides sympathy, encouragement, and trust. Etc. Emotional support can mean your just talking to any person about an ongoing issue that is bothering you, or maybe your nervous to do something at school or to get your shots, You might bring a friend with you to get some shots etc. If emotional support did not exist humanity would crash and burn, .. literally. Relationships, or friendships might start to decrease Making humanity and social interaction go down, If emotional support was not available nor existing than it would eventually loop back to if social support did not exist.

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CONCLUSION

Overall, spending time with dogs did distract the participants from intense emotions, and many said that they felt better as the week went on. The incorrect part of my hypothesis was that the participants would try to match the energy of the dog bringing their mood up but there was no evidence to prove that right, so it is false for now and a future project may look at this in more detail. I think that this experiment can impact society because, it has good evidence and can some day be used as a tool for emotional and social support. I think with this new research and knowledge that dogs can help mood, dogs can be brought into

therapy and receive recognition much more now that there is evidence supporting this theory. I think dogs can be used as a tool for emotional and support systems, but they should still follow rules and regulations like wavers, risks, and precautions, and therapists should make sure that the participant is ok with the decision of a dog being brought into the therapy session. I think dogs do benefit mood, but should not be relied on as they are also animals and experience emotions as well, so that should be kept in mind.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis is that dogs have positive effects on a person's overall mood. Dogs overall are in a state of good mood when around people and also, canines are good at being a distraction to humans and are very social, wanting to interact with people. Dogs can have high energy, but are also very comforting when needed, and people like to match the energy around them. The hypothesis is that interacting with a dog will make people match the energy of the dog and end up improving their mood.

What is mental health

Mental health is the emotional state of a person and their well being. It affects how we feel, interact, and act towards others. Mental health helps us be social with others, helps us do everyday things, and focus much better. Mental health is responsible for helping us make friends, be connected with our community, learn how to respect and love ourselves, and plan and organize our everyday tasks to be easier.

What is Social support?

Social support is assistance from a person. Social support is a type of psychological support that will help you find resources to cope with issues you are having, or someone who can give you feedback and some solutions to your issue.

Dogs in therapy

Dogs are in therapy across Alberta just not too often, certainly not often enough. That is because there is not enough research behind it to support many service animals and emotional support animals being brought into sessions and this is a problem! Research should be done to see if dogs in therapy would be beneficial for mental health.

Why mental health and well-being is important

Mental health has a huge effect on everyday life, and it determines how we interact with the environment, people, and animals. It also can affect if you can get a job. For example, if someone sees that you really are not good at handling stress and high demand, they may not offer a job, making it hard to find a job. Having self love and respect is also really important so if someone had poor mental health, they may hurt their own feelings and constantly feel really negative intense emotions. Good mental health makes it easier to cope with situations and easier to control emotions, which is why mental health should be prioritized.

Why is social support important?

Social support is important because it helps us understand emotions, and cope with them. Social support can relieve stress by using a given strategy to cope with problems. Social support really benefits mental health and wellbeing because it is a tool a lot of people use to cope with emotions and stress.

Poor mental health VS balanced mental health

Poor mental health

is unhealthy, or unbalanced mental well being. Poor mental health has many effects on your daily life. The diagram is showcasing multiple cons to having poor mental health. Having poor mental health is truly unhealthy for you mentally because you are not in the right headspace to work efficiently or to make responsible decisions.

Balanced mental health

is the opposite of poor mental health. Most people thrive for balanced mental health because it is really important to be balanced with mental health, Meaning that all of the benefits listed in the picture are possible balanced mental health won't always be the case. That is for good reason though, because everyone experiences changes in their mood sometimes, and sometimes feeling poorly. But feeling your feelings does not mean you have poor mental health, it's actually really normal.

This diagram

is comparing balanced to not balanced mental health to represent how two different types of mental health are, and how that impacts you.

“Balanced mental health”

Balanced mental health is used because there is no such thing as perfect mental health. People may take the word “Good” as you never have any other emotion than happy, and that's not normal. It is super normal to feel sad, angry, or scared without having poor mental health. It is always good to feel your emotions, so let your emotions be emotions. You can feel your emotions, but keep in mind that you also need to control your emotions in an appropriate way.

Possible outcomes if social support did not exist

If social support did not exist humanity would be tremendously affected because every person needs social support in a different way to support their needs. If social support did not exist nobody would get that support needed, which would mean that social interactions would most likely go down because of the way that society is built. Technology is becoming big meaning there is less and less social interactions so people might lose that skill and this is an ongoing problem.

What is emotional support?

Emotional support is a person who is going to listen to you and give you sympathy and show you they are listening. Someone giving emotional support will not give any feedback, they are just giving you support and showing you that you can trust them, they

are there for you for when you crash and there ready to hold you
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Why is Emotional support so important?

Emotional support is so important because sometimes you really do not need a solution, you just need to talk about it to someone and feel that they support you. Emotional support is so useful in situations in the moment when you just need to cry and hug someone. Social support is great, but sometimes people need a specific type of social support like emotional support in the moment for most people.

Emotional support VS Social support

Emotional support- Emotional support is where you are not there to fix an issue, you are there to talk to someone so they can feel not alone. It is nice to let it out and talk to someone. Anyone can give emotional support, which is nice because then you do not have to pay for therapy sessions or have someone you may not trust as much as your best friend or family member **etc.**

Social support- Social support sometimes looks like someone helping to fix a problem. Social support may look like feedback on how to act towards a person, or solve a problem. Social support is not a place to just talk and have someone listen to you, it is where someone giving that support wants your problem solved. These two very different ways of support share many benefits! Both of these are really awesome and helpful.

Common Strategies

Common strategies mean that a lot of people use them more than other strategies. I'm going to share the most common ones and why they are so common!

Breathing- There are a lot of breathing exercises and they are so simple and you do not need any items to do it.

Music- Listening to music gets your mind off of what is happening, and the music might relax you. People really like music so that adds to it!

Distraction- Distraction is one of my favorite ones because it works really well because when you are just doom spiraling about your issue, this doom spiral makes the issue a lot worse. Also, distraction is easy on the go because you again do not need anything to do this coping strategy.

Eat food- When you are hungry everything escalates in your head. Most people feel way better after eating!

Drink water- This is one of the most common ones because I think drinking water is just something else to focus on and is refreshing. Drinking water also re-hydrates you if you are upset.

The Frontal Lobes

The frontal lobes are considered to be the center of emotions. This means that the frontal lobes take part in how you react to situations and the way you feel. The frontal lobes are located at the front of the brain behind your forehead. The frontal lobes are responsible for many functions. These functions include, organization, planning skills, self control, social interactions, empathy, personality, emotions, and motor functions. The frontal lobe is also responsible for important psychological skills such as judgment, problem solving, memory, language, responsible decisions, and coping with emotions.

Benefits of dogs being in therapy

Social interactions - in therapy **sessions** you are interacting with people as you are talking with them about whatever needs to be talked about, but even if you are not talking you're still socially interacting just with a dog and this can help!

Stress reduction - sometimes going to a therapy session can be a little bit stressful and scary. The stress can really depend on the person and the situation, but dogs have some type of spark and can really relax some people at certain times.

Comfort and support- Dogs can be comforting and loving showing support and can make you feel more relaxed, safe, and comfortable to express yourself better!

Enjoyment - Some people really like dogs and enjoy being around them and interacting with them.

Non verbal communication - Dogs have a simple understanding of body language and they can provide support and comfort during times when they can tell you are struggling.

Emotional support - Dogs are great at providing emotional support and solidarity, they are perfect for that and can help you regulate your emotions better and get back to an appropriate emotion level.

Negative Effects of Dogs Being in Therapy

Allergies- allergies being so common have eliminated dogs from being a part of most therapy sessions. Allergies are important and therapy is meant to be a safe place and someone may not feel as safe as they should if they know there are dogs and that they are allergic to them.

Rules- Rules are rules and need to be followed and some places do not allow dogs inside to keep everyone safe so people are comfortable and safe, sometimes it is just not worth taking the risk

Unpredictable behaviours- Dogs can be very unpredictable because they are like any other animal, and they need to be treated with cautiousness.

Overwhelmed dogs- Dogs can get overwhelmed sometimes causing them to possibly be unpredictable and hurt someone.

Distracting- Dogs can take away from the lesson, or conversation going on making it hard to concentrate and maintain a growth mindset.

Discomfort- some people are scared of dogs or they may feel a little intimidated by the dog and therapy is like a consensus meaning everyone has to agree.

Dogs in therapy

Dogs are in therapy across Alberta just not too often, certainly not often enough. That is because there is not enough research behind it to support many service animals and emotional support animals being brought into sessions and this is a problem! Research should be done to see if dogs in therapy would be beneficial for mental health.

Why should dogs be brought into therapy sessions more often?

Dogs have an impact on humans in multiple ways, but they can have a negative or positive effect if they are not used as a proper resource. If people are given the option as they should than they will be mostly [positive with risks but the people who decided to do it are now doing it at there own risk].

Dogs in social and emotional support

Emotional support dogs; provide comfort and companionship to the dog owner, but are not trained to do specific tasks that assist a disability

Emotional support dogs are meant to provide comfort and support during any time needed. They are not trained to do specific things like a therapy dog for special needs. Emotional support animals don't get any Treatment to be allowed in to other places because some places may think that is a pet.

Social support dogs are there to help the public. If you go to the airport, you might see a dog that has a vest saying "pet me" this means that it is a dog meant for people who are scared to fly to help them calm and control their emotions. Dogs in social support are not seen often and could definitely be brought into helping mental health way more!

This projects impact on humanity

This project has an effect on humanity to open up the door for dogs as another resource for humans to acknowledge and use! This project could benefit a lot of people and their mental health. If someone found this experiment and thought it was really cool they might share that information and people may even start interacting with dogs a little bit more. A small act makes a big difference! People might start having improved moods meaning a little bit less people might fight with each other. It wouldn't make a big difference, maybe not even noticeable to the average person but if people started using knowledge and sharing it, it might spread helping humanity's mental health. I think of it like a rumor in a school!

Community interaction & connection

I connected with some psychologists that work with children! I also have some University students working on their PHD or Masters degree in psychology as participants that may help them understand how to help the children they work with. They participated in my project and I'm very excited about it! I also reached out to the program called B.A.R.K. and asked them and Dr. Benfit if there was anything I should research specifically about dogs to support my project. They responded and gave me some articles and a lovely response which helped me understand my research and how to help mental health.

B.A.R.K.

- B.A.R.K. is a therapy session program that is designed to reduce stress, anxiety, and to improve your overall well being. This was done by having a session with a dog and you get to hangout with a dog and a handler for however long you needed. The dogs are trained and have handlers to help the dogs out when needed. There are currently 60 therapy dogs that are volunteering right now and multiple alumni dogs! B.A.R.K. does walk-in sessions designed for students to just drop in and hangout with the dogs for as long as they needed! **B.A.R.K.** is located at the University of British Columbia.

The B.A.R.K. Pilot Program

The pilot program was an online program designed to provide emotional support and companionship over a video that was filmed then put online. It was created in 2020 to support people

during covid 19 as that can be very stressful too! There were thirteen handlers and their therapy dogs who filmed videos! These videos were 5 minutes long and reduced anxiety, stress, and loneliness.

Acknowledgements

I acknowledge all the participants, as well as their dogs, for participating in my study to contribute to scientific understanding. I will also acknowledge the B.A.R.K. team for providing resources as well as a clear understanding of what they research and what they do. I also thank my teacher for encouraging me not to give up when I faced great challenges and supporting me all the way through, as well as my mom for supporting me and encouraging me to push myself to my best capabilities.

Research & impact on university students

The **B.A.R.K.** team did some studies over the course of three semesters in 2013 to 2014. How it worked was students would tell the **B.A.R.K.** team how they were feeling stress wise and stress levels were fairly high having exams coming up. There was a huge impact overall coming from a rating scale from 1-5 with 1 being totally not stressed and 5 being incredibly stressed. The average level of stress before the B.A.R.K. program was 4.47 later being reduced to the average of 2.73 using the same type of scale to assess their feelings. These sessions do not have a limit, University students are able to stay as long as they want until they feel less stressed. The average amount of time was 35 minutes with the dogs!

Variables

Variables in this project are:

Mood, activity with a dog, and the time spent in the activity with the dog. Mood was measured using an emoji based Likert scale ratings from 1-6 to describe overall mood from sad to happy with 1 being very sad, 2 being sad, 3 being neutral, 4 being happy, 5 being , and 6 being overjoyed. The activity with a dog was a choice of either cuddling or walking the dog, and the time spent doing the activity with a dog was measured using minutes.

Procedure

Participants (n=10) recorded their mood before and after an activity with their dog (either cuddling or taking their dog for a walk). They will also report how long they spent doing the activity with their dog. This experiment will take place over seven days with participants reporting their mood before and after spending time with their dog for seven days. All information will be collected online using an anonymous google doc and will be stored confidentially. Changes in mood from before to after spending time with their dog will be measured to see if time spent with a dog helps their mood and mental wellbeing. The experiment takes 7 days to do with the minimum of spending at least 5 minutes with a dog to record it.

An average before score was calculated for each person and an average after score. Then each participant's average before score and after score were then also averaged to see if there was a change in mood after participating in a dog activity on average across the whole sample.

ANALYSES

My observations showed that on average mood got better after doing one of the assigned activities with the dog. With a 1.3 average improvement, meaning there is an improvement in mood by spending time with a dog. I believe there is an improvement because the participant got distracted a little bit from something ongoing in their head. There was something very interesting that happened: children had a bigger increase of mood than adults did. I think children have a bigger increase in mood than adults because they get distracted easier than adults as their brains and skills aren't fully developed as most adults have fully developed brains and foundational skills. I think my hypothesis is correct: I hypothesized that dogs can improve overall mood by distracting the person from their issue that was preventing them from feeling overjoyed or somewhat happy.

One part of the hypothesis is that people may match the energy of the dog and that could help improve their mood, but that was not observed. Instead, I believe these results show that people were distracted or they were improved in their mood after seeing their dog.

One participant saw a decrease in mood which was the opposite of my hypothesis. This may be because they did not have a good relationship

with their dog, or the dog was not in a good mood and may have been overwhelmed since he was 14 years old (which is very old for a dog).

Some participants did not see a big increase in their mood, and I think this may be because they started out already very happy and in a good mood so their change was not as big as the ones who started out in worse moods.

Application

This project can improve overall mental well-being. This project provides data and research to answer my question and hypothesis: whether social support from dogs can improve mood. This project can improve overall mental well-being as a whole by providing information to a theory proving it incorrect or correct. This provides scientific data supporting that spending time with a dog improves overall mood and mental well-being and can now be a new way to help people.

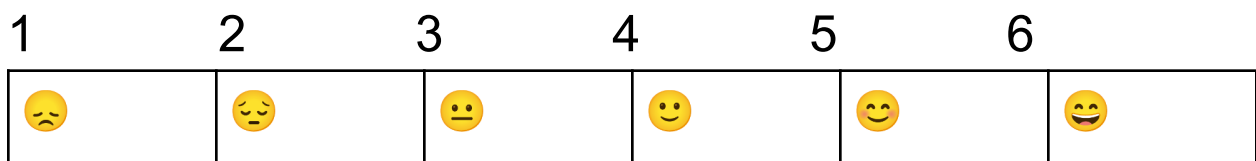
There are some sources of error in this study that could have had an impact on the results. First, participants may not have had a good relationship with their dog and this made their mood worse. Also, participants may be overwhelmed by a dog and this would not help their mood. Participants also may not have understood the instructions or had completed the survey incorrectly, or may have exaggerated their answers. Next, the dogs used in the study may have been overwhelmed and that could have possible negative effects on the dog and the person. Also sometimes the weather may have made it so that they could not go on a walk. The dog may have wanted to be alone and not cuddle or walk when the participant wanted to, or the participant may have been afraid of dogs. Some participants dropped out and did not complete all seven days. Also there were a mix of children and adults and so it is not known if it was a bigger or lesser improvement based on their age. Also the age of the dog may have impacted how the person interacted with the dog. Also, people's personalities might be different and have different impacts.

Overall, there is a lot of possible human error, the results depend on the current relationship with the dog, personality, age,. and so future studies should take these things into consideration.

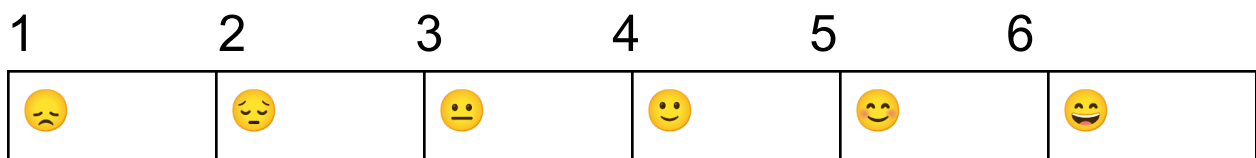
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<https://doi.org/10.1177/02654075221113365>

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